5.2 Aesthetics/Light and Glare

5.2 AESTHETICS/LIGHT AND GLARE

This section describes the existing visual environment in and around the project area. This section also assesses the potential for aesthetics/light and glare impacts using accepted methods of evaluating visual quality, as well as identifying the type and degree of change the proposed project would likely have on the character of a landscape. The analysis in this section is primarily based on information provided by the project Applicant and verified through site visits conducted by RBF Consulting (RBF) on May 3, 2011, August 23, 2011, and September 8, 2011. Where additional information has been used to evaluate the potential impacts, that information has been referenced. Photographic documentation and visual simulations of the project site and proposed site conditions are utilized to supplement the visual analysis and to fulfill the requirements of CEQA. The visual simulation modeling methodology utilized as part of this analysis involves simple massing diagrams of the proposed buildings. Windows, doors, and other architectural details are not modeled.

5.2.1 EXISTING SETTING

SCENIC VIEWS AND VISTAS

The City of Seal Beach (City) is located along the Pacific Ocean between the cities of Huntington Beach and Long Beach, within the vicinity of Anaheim Bay and Alamitos Bay. According to the *City of Seal Beach General Plan* (General Plan), dated December 2003, designated view parks are located within the City, usually along coastal bluffs. These view parks are smaller passive parks designed to take advantage of a significant view. They often focus upon ocean or bay views.

No designated view parks are located within the viewshed of the project site. However, a designated neighborhood park and recreational facility/community center (approximately 2.6-acre Marina Center and Park), a regional beach/park (Windsurf Park), the River's End Staging Area (RESA), the San Gabriel River Greenbelt (referenced as the San Gabriel River Bike Trail throughout this EIR), and a public beach are located within the viewshed of the proposed project.

Neighborhood Parks and Recreational Facilities/Community Centers

Neighborhood parks are designed to meet the needs of individual residential developments within the City. While providing for the recreational needs of several age groups, the neighborhood park is primarily designed to meet the needs of the 5- to 14-year-old group. Children's play equipment and tennis and basketball courts are among the facilities often found at neighborhood parks. The approximately 2.6-acre Marina Center and Park adjoins the project site to the northeast. Currently, no views across the project site (toward the Pacific Ocean and San Gabriel River) are afforded from the Marina Center and Park due to the existing intervening mature trees and fencing.

Regional Beaches and Parks

Regional beaches and parks are designated to meet the needs of residents and non-residents and usually attract a large number of people from outside of the immediate area. Generally these facilities are over 30 acres in size and appeal to all age groups. Natural surroundings and spaciousness are emphasized to a greater degree than in community parks. Regional facilities are often used for day-long outings. The shoreline of Seal Beach is considered to be of regional

significance. Recreational activities are associated with the ocean, beach, and pier. Primary recreational activities include swimming, wading, surfing, pier and sport fishing, sunbathing, jogging, volleyball, and some non-organized games.

Windsurf Park and Surfside Beach are located to the south of the project site. The scenic views and vistas represented at each of these locations look south, west, and northwest, away from the project site. Thus, the proposed project is not included within a scenic view or vista at these particular locations.

San Gabriel River Greenbelt

The Open Space/Recreation/Conservation Element of the General Plan describes Greenbelts as "recognizable expanses of undeveloped land that provide an attractive open space setting and a buffer between adjacent land uses." The San Gabriel River Greenbelt trends along the western portion of the project site in a north/south direction, terminating at Surfside Beach. Cyclists/pedestrians utilizing the bike trail have scenic views toward the Pacific Ocean and San Gabriel River that also encompass the proposed project.

KEY VIEWS

A Key View is an area (in this case, the project site) that can be seen from a particular public location. Selected Key Views, which were determined in consultation with City staff, represent views from certain publicly accessible locations. Key Views represent public views from both the public right-of-way and publicly accessible areas located within the vicinity of the proposed project. Characteristics for each Key View are defined within foreground, middleground, and/or background views. Characteristics located within foreground views are located at close range and tend to dominate the view. Characteristics located within middleground views are distinguishable, yet not as sharp as those characteristics located in the foreground views. Features located within the background views have few details and distinctions in landform and surface features. The emphasis of background views is an outline or edge. Silhouettes and ridges of one landmass against another are the conspicuous visual aspects of the background, with the skyline serving as the strongest line. Objects in the background eventually fade to obscurity with increasing distance.

RBF staff visited the site to take photographs and make observations from Key Views that were selected in consultation with City staff. The camera locations were recorded utilizing Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment. A Fuji G-617 Panoramic camera with a 1:8/105 millimeter lens was selected as the primary photographic source, as it yields an accurate representation of human visual perception. Backup photos were also taken using a Nikon D1X digital camera with a fixed 50 millimeter lens.

Three Key Views (from the San Gabriel River Greenbelt, from motorists traveling along 1st Street, and from motorists exiting the River Beach Townhomes by the Sea) were selected for this analysis. Exhibit 5.2-1, *Key View Location Map*, illustrates the locations of the Key Views. Key View 1 was selected to depict potential impacts to scenic views and vistas, while Key Views 2 and 3 were chosen to depict potential impacts to the character/quality of the project area. It is noted that Key View 1 depicts both scenic views/vistas as well as character/quality. The following describes the viewshed from Key View 1; refer to the *Visual Character* section below for a discussion of Key Views 2 and 3.

NOT TO SCALE

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Key View Location Map

Exhibit 5.2-1

Key View 1. Views from Key View 1 (approximately 12 feet above mean sea level [msl]) are afforded from the San Gabriel River Greenbelt, which trends along the western portion of the project site; refer to Exhibit 5.2-2, *Key View 1 - Existing Conditions*. Foreground views of the project site and the San Gabriel River are afforded. The existing on-site residential structure is visible. The San Gabriel River Greenbelt is visible throughout this view. Middleground views include the vacant portions of the project site and opaque silt chain-link fencing. Background views are afforded to the Pacific Ocean.

VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY

RBF conducted a photographic inventory of the project area to document the existing visual character and quality of the project site and its surroundings; refer to Exhibit 5.2-3, *Existing On-Site Conditions*, and Exhibit 5.2-4, *Existing Surrounding Conditions*. The most prominent factors influencing the character of the project site and its surroundings are the Pacific Ocean and San Gabriel River.

The project area consists of low and medium density residential uses with a beach town character. The project area is specifically characterized as a residential and public use area for both local and regional recreation. Residential uses are situated to the north and east of the project site. Recreational uses are situated to the northeast (Marina Center and Park), south (Windsurf Park and Surfside Beach), and west (the San Gabriel River Greenbelt) of the project site. The San Gabriel River Greenbelt also trends in a north/south direction within the western portion of the project site.

Currently, the project site consists of vacant lands and a residential/commercial use within the northwestern portion of the project site. The vacant portions of the project site are characterized by non-native grassland, with the exception of the southeastern portion of the project site, which is characterized by exotic landscaping. An opaque silt/chain-link fence surrounds the majority of the project site, obstructing public views through the project site.

As previously noted, the selected Key Views represent views from certain publicly accessible locations. The following describes the existing character of the site and its surroundings from Key Views 1 through 3.

Key View 1. The existing character, as viewed from Key View 1, consists of residential, recreation, and open space; refer to Exhibit 5.2-2. Foreground views of an existing residence and the San Gabriel River are afforded. The existing residence is two stories in height and consists of wood siding materials. The San Gabriel River Greenbelt is visible throughout this view. Middleground views include the vacant portions of the project site and opaque silt/chain-link fencing. Background views are afforded of the Pacific Ocean.

Key View 2. As described above this Key View affords views of the project site to northbound motorists along 1st Street; refer to Exhibit 5.2-5, *Key Views 2 and 3 - Existing Conditions*. The opaque silt/chain-link fence is visible along the project's boundary throughout this view. The existing character within this Key View consists of a residential beach community character. Medium density residential structures (two to three stories in height) are visible along 1st Street, to the east of the project site. However, the pedestrian scale experienced along 1st Street is increased due to residential structures fronting 1st Street and rear-loaded garages (which are not visible in this Key View). A variety of building material, color, and texture is noted throughout this view.

KEY VIEW 1

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Key View 1 – Existing Conditions

Exhibit 5.2-2

View of the southeastern portion of the project site.

View looking west of the central portion of the project site.

View looking west of the northern portion of the project site.

View looking northeast across the project site.

View of the existing residential uses to the east of the project site.

View of the beach parking lot and Rivers End Café to the south of the project site.

View of the San Gabriel River and commercial uses (located in the City of Long Beach) to the west of the project site.

View of the residential uses (River Beach Townhomes by the Sea) to the north of the project site.

KEY VIEW 2

KEY VIEW 3

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Key View 2 and 3 – Existing Conditions

Exhibit 5.2-5

Key View 3. Views from this Key View are afforded to motorists exiting the River Beach Townhomes by the Sea; refer to Exhibit 5.2-5. This Key View encompasses a commercial and higher density residential character. This view includes Marina Drive and the associated planted median in the foreground. Middleground views include the opaque silt/chain-link fence along the project's boundary. The topmost portions of the residential structures to the east of the project site are also visible within Middleground views. No background views are afforded.

LIGHT AND GLARE

Lighting effects are associated with the use of artificial light during the evening and nighttime hours. There are two primary sources of light: light emanating from building interiors passing through windows and light from exterior sources (i.e., street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, parking lot lighting, and landscape lighting). Light introduction can be a nuisance to adjacent residential areas, diminish the view of the clear night sky and, if uncontrolled, can cause disturbances. Uses such as residences and hotels are considered light sensitive, because occupants have expectations of privacy during evening hours and may be subject to disturbance by bright light sources. Light spill is typically defined as the presence of unwanted light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated. With respect to lighting, the degree of illumination may vary widely depending on the amount of light generated, height of the light source, presence of barriers or obstructions, type of light source, and weather conditions.

Glare is primarily a daytime occurrence caused by the reflection of sunlight or artificial light by highly polished surfaces such as window glass or reflective materials and, to a lesser degree, from broad expanses of light-colored surfaces. Perceived glare is the unwanted and potentially objectionable sensation as observed by a person looking directly into the light source of a luminaire. Daytime glare generation is common in urban areas and is typically associated with buildings with exterior facades largely or entirely comprised of highly reflective glass. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by the reflection of artificial light sources such as automobile headlights. Glare generation is typically related to either moving vehicles or sun angles, although glare resulting from reflected sunlight can occur regularly at certain times of the year. Glare-sensitive uses include residences, hotels, transportation corridors, and aircraft landing corridors.

Minimal light and glare are currently generated within the project boundaries (as the majority of the project site consists of vacant land, with the exception of the on-site residential structure). Surrounding light and glare are generated in the project area as a result of exterior security lighting, interior lighting for residential uses, and security lighting associated with commercial uses to the north west of the San Gabriel River (within the City of Long Beach). The roadways located adjacent to the project site, namely 1st Street, Marina Drive, Ocean Avenue, and Central Way, include car headlights and street lighting that contribute to the existing light effects on the project site and in the surrounding area. A traffic signal is located at the Marina Drive/1st Street intersection, to the northeast of the project site.

5.2.2 REGULATORY SETTING

CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT

The Coastal Act (Public Resources Code Section 30200, *Coastal Resources Planning and Management Policies*) contains specific policies pertaining to, but not limited to, Recreation, Land Resources, and Development. These policies are implemented primarily through the coastal development permit process; the development, certification, implementation, and amendment of Local Coastal Programs (LCP's); and the federal consistency review process. The policies outlined in Section 30200 constitute the standards by which the permissibility of a proposed development subject to the provisions of Section 30200 is determined. Policies pertaining to aesthetics/light and glare are as follows:

Article 6 – Development

Section 30251 Scenic and Visual Qualities. The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to protect views to and along the ocean and scenic coastal areas, to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

CITY OF SEAL BEACH GENERAL PLAN

City policies pertaining to scenic vistas and visual character are contained in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. These policies include the following, among others:

Land Use Element

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Features of the Community

A goal of the City is to maintain and promote those social and physical qualities that enhance the character of the community and the environment.

Waterfront

The shoreline, one of the City's most valuable assets, shall be maintained and improved to provide maximum benefits to residents and visitors.

Design Review Procedure

In the future, if necessary, the City can establish a Design (Architectural) Review Board to review all applications for the construction of new buildings. The goal of such a program is to improve site

planning, and to generate a higher quality of appearance of structures and landscaping by the private and public sectors. This program could easily be enacted for the Coastal Area where the higher densities require some sense of order.

Design (Architectural) criteria may include the following:

1. Building materials will be of a character deemed compatible with a beach environment (wood, brick, etc.).
2. Roofs shall have a low pitch with no flat roofs. (Flat roofs create a boxlike appearance.)
3. Where colors are used, they will not be harsh or unharmonious.

The preceding design criteria are of a general nature and should be developed for the particular community of Seal Beach, with the unique environment of the beach in mind. The design criteria would then be enforced through provisions in the zoning ordinance.

CITY OF SEAL BEACH MUNICIPAL CODE

Section 10.15.055, *Street Lighting*. The Municipal Code would require the Applicant to provide street lighting facilities designed and constructed in compliance with the City's improvement standards and specifications.

Chapter 10.40, *Streetscapes*. Streetscapes are the areas between buildings in Seal Beach that are occupied by the public street right-of-way and related street, sidewalk, and landscaping improvements, and any setback and yard areas on private property. The City's streetscapes are among the City's most important urban design features due to appearance and character that create the public image of the City. This Chapter provides standards and guidelines for the planning and design of the publicly-owned portions of the streetscape, as well as shared private facilities such as private streets and alleys. The standards and guidelines of this Chapter establish appropriate requirements for the width and uses of public and private street rights-of-way (for traffic, parking, pedestrians, bicycles, and landscaping).

New streets are required to minimize the width of travel lanes, use landscaping to separate sidewalks from the street curb, define the street edge with frequently spaced street trees, and have pedestrian-scaled street lights. Street lighting should be consistent with the small town character of Seal Beach, and should be designed with as much concern for the pedestrian environment as for vehicular environments. The height of new lighting fixtures should not exceed 20 feet. Street lights should be designed to direct light to appropriate surfaces and to minimize glare into residences. Street design would not compromise public safety or emergency vehicle access. Final street design and street lighting approval is required to be obtained by the Director of Public Works/City Engineer.

Chapter 11.3.25, *Specific Plan Regulations*. Pursuant to the City Zoning Code Section 11.3.25.005, *Permitted Uses*, all property in the Specific Plan Regulation (SPR) Zone shall be used only for the purposes permitted by the General Plan and the Specific Plan adopted for such property. It is noted that the DWP Specific Plan, which encompasses the project site, was adopted in 1982 and amended in 1996.

Section 11.3.25.010, *General Provisions*. Specific plans are addressed as follows (as applicable to aesthetic issues of concern):

B. With respect to any property for which a Specific Plan has been adopted, no tentative tract map or tentative parcel map may be approved nor may any permit license or other entitlement for use be granted or issued unless such map, permit, license or other entitlement for use is consistent with such Specific Plan.

DWP SPECIFIC PLAN

Section B, *Land Use Development Plan/General Development Standards*. The DWP Specific Plan's two principal land use categories are defined, as follows:

- *Visitor-Serving Land Uses*: A hotel and the necessary ancillary support uses, including but not limited to restaurants, retail uses, service uses, meeting conference rooms, and banquet facilities.

- *Open Space Uses*: Public parks, green belts, bike trails, nature trails, hiking trails, and any passive recreational uses normally located in parks or open spaces.

Pursuant to the City Zoning Code Section 11.3.25.005, *Permitted Uses*, all property in the Specific Plan Regulation (SPR) Zone shall be used only for the purposes permitted by the General Plan and the Specific Plan adopted for such property. The following adopted Specific Plan standards currently apply to the proposed project.

Section 5.0, *Circulation*. All streets shall conform to the standards established by the City Engineer. The minimum setbacks, measured from the roadway right-of-way, for 1st Street (20 feet) and Marina Drive (20 feet) shall apply to structures abutting these roadways.

Section 6.0, *Building Height*. The maximum building height for Visitor Serving uses shall not exceed thirty-five feet (35') except as authorized by Section 28-2317(3) of the City's Municipal Code. To ensure the passive nature of the Open Space use, only light standards and park benches shall be allowed, and the height of said light standards shall not exceed fifteen feet (15').

Section 8.0, *Architectural Control*. Spanish-style architecture shall be used for all buildings and structures located on the northerly 30 percent of the site. As authorized by the Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, the Redevelopment Agency of the City shall designate a separate architectural review committee.

Section 9.0, *Design*. All buildings and/or structures shall be tied together by the following elements (note that all landscaping shall be integrated with the park):

- Materials;
- Textures;
- Roof Lines;
- Landscaping;
- Courtyards;

- Lighting;
- Signage;
- Colors; and
- Hard Surface Pavement.

5.2.3 IMPACT THRESHOLDS AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* contains the Initial Study Environmental Checklist form used during preparation of the project Initial Study, which is contained in Appendix 11.1 of this EIR. The Initial Study includes questions relating to aesthetics and visual resources. The issues presented in the Initial Study Checklist have been utilized as thresholds of significance in this section. Accordingly, a project may create a significant adverse environmental impact if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista (refer to Impact Statement AES-1);

- Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway (refer to Section 8.0, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*);

- Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings (refer to Impact Statements AES-2 and AES-3); and/or

- Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area (refer to Impact Statement AES-4).

Based on these standards, the effects of the proposed project have been categorized as either a "less than significant impact" or a "potentially significant impact." Mitigation measures are recommended for potentially significant impacts. If a potentially significant impact cannot be reduced to a less than significant level through the application of mitigation, it is categorized as a significant and unavoidable impact.

5.2.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

SCENIC VIEWS AND VISTAS

AES-1 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WOULD NOT HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE AFFECT ON A SCENIC VIEW OR VISTA.

Impact Analysis: As previously noted, Windsurf Park and the beach are located to the south of the project site. The scenic views and vistas represented at each of these locations look south, west, and northwest, away from the project site. Thus, the proposed project is not included within a scenic view or vista at these particular locations. However, the San Gabriel River Greenbelt trends along the western portion of the project site in a north/south direction and terminates off-site at the River's End Staging Area (RESA). Recreational viewers using the bike trail would have scenic views toward the Pacific Ocean and San Gabriel River that also encompass the proposed project.

Photosimulations were prepared for each Key View location in order to demonstrate the degree of change resulting from project implementation; refer to Exhibit 5.2-1. The simulations have been utilized to depict, at a conceptual level of detail, the "proposed" project conditions. These simulations are subject to change and are intended to provide the reader with information on the form, size, and scale of the proposed structures within the project area. A three-dimensional wire frame model was created using Computer Aided Design and Drafting (CADD) files. Imaging software was used to align the computer model to the site photographs. The computer model was then superimposed over photographs from each of the Key Views and minor camera alignment changes were made to all known reference points within the view. Foreground masking of objects was performed with Adobe Photoshop to enhance realism.

The following analyzes the project's effects on scenic views of the San Gabriel River and Pacific Ocean, as experienced from the San Gabriel River Greenbelt (Key View 1).

Key View 1. Views from Key View 1 are afforded to the cyclists/pedestrians traveling south along the San Gabriel River Greenbelt; refer to Exhibit 5.2-6, *Key View 1 - Existing and Proposed Conditions*. Foreground views of the existing on-site residential structure have been replaced with the proposed residential uses. Middleground views of vacant land are afforded within the southern portion of the project site. A comparison of existing and proposed conditions reveals that project implementation would not result in view blockage to the Pacific Ocean and San Gabriel River.

Further, the existing opaque silt/chain-link fencing at the project site would no longer encroach onto the recreational trail and San Gabriel River. Thus, project implementation would not impair the existing views of the Pacific Ocean and San Gabriel River from Key View 1.

The City General Plan defines a greenbelt as a "recognizable expanses of undeveloped land that provide an attractive open space setting and a buffer between adjacent land uses." Implementation of the proposed project would maintain the existing recreational trail and provide open space in the vicinity of the San Gabriel River. The proposed open space uses within the southern portion of the project site would further provide a buffer between the existing and proposed residential uses and the recreational uses surrounding the project site. Refer to Impact Statement AES-3 for an analysis of the change in character/quality during project operations from Key View 1. Project implementation would result in a less than significant impact in this regard.

Consistency with the California Coastal Act

As analyzed in Key View 1 above, implementation of the proposed project would not impair the existing views to the Pacific Ocean and San Gabriel River from these public coastal areas. Further, the proposed project would increase views across open space uses on-site. With the proposed open space sited in the southern portion of the site, the proposed development along Marina Drive would appear subordinate to the character of its setting, as viewed from public coastal areas. Thus, the proposed project would be consistent with Section 30251 of the California Coastal Act and impacts in this regard are less than significant.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance: Less Than Significant Impact.

EXISTING CONDITION

PROPOSED CONDITION

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Key View 1 – Existing and Proposed Conditions

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Exhibit 5.2-6

SHORT-TERM VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY

AES-2 PROJECT CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES WOULD TEMPORARILY DEGRADE THE VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

Impact Analysis: As described in Section 3.5, *Phasing/Construction*, project grading is anticipated to occur in one phase and would include the finished residential pads. Basic infrastructure (including streets, parkways, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, and water and sewer lines) would be installed in a single phase as part of the overall project grading. The residential units would then be developed individually by homeowners depending on market conditions and demand.

Surrounding sensitive receptors that would have views for a long duration of the project site during construction include multi-family residential uses (River Beach Townhomes by the Sea) to the north and single-family residential uses to the east. Sensitive receptors that would have moderate and short duration views would include recreational users at Windsurf Park, RESA, and the San Gabriel River Greenbelt, as well as motorists traveling along Marina Drive and 1st Street.

Construction-related activities would temporarily influence the character of the project site, as viewed from surrounding sensitive viewers. During construction of the proposed Tentative Tract Map No. 17425, the various construction activities would intermittently alter the character of the project site and its surroundings. Graded surfaces, construction debris, construction equipment, and truck traffic would be visible. Additionally, soil would be stockpiled and equipment for grading activities would be staged at various locations throughout the northern portion of the project site. The duration and intensity of project construction would vary with each stage. Most of the heavy grading equipment would be on-site for the period needed to complete the demolition of the existing residence and rough grading. In order to mitigate noise levels due to grading, Mitigation Measure N-1 requires the installation of a solid noise attenuation barrier (temporary barrier or noise curtain) along the eastern project boundary (along 1st Street) during the construction grading phase only. This barrier could be up to 10-feet tall; however, it should be noted that views across the project site are already obstructed due to the opaque silt chain-link fencing that is located along the perimeter of the project site. Upon completion of the grading phase, the temporary noise barrier would be removed.

Adjoining residents would have direct views of the project's construction activities, which would visibly degrade the character for this area. Mitigation Measure AES-1 would require the preparation of a Construction Management Plan, which specifies requirements for equipment and vehicle staging areas, stockpiling of materials, fencing (i.e., temporary fencing with opaque material), and haul route(s). All staging areas would be required to be sited and screened in a manner that would minimize public views and views from surrounding residents to the staging areas. Temporary fencing would appear similar in character to the existing on-site perimeter fence. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-1 would minimize the visual impacts, as viewed by the surrounding residents and motorists. Upon completion of construction of the proposed Tentative Tract Map No. 17425, individual home owners would then construct homes on the graded pads at the site. Construction of the 48 residential structures is anticipated to occur over approximately two years. However, as structures are erected on-site, they would screen views to on-site construction activities during this time. As these impacts are temporary in nature and would cease upon project completion, the project's construction-related impacts to the visual character or quality of the site

and its surroundings would be reduced to less than significant levels with implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-1.

Mitigation Measures:

AES-1 Prior to issuance of any grading and/or demolition permits, whichever occurs first, a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted for review and approval by the Director of Development Services. The Construction Management Plan shall, at a minimum, indicate the equipment and vehicle staging areas, stockpiling of materials, fencing (i.e., temporary fencing with opaque material), and haul route(s). Staging areas shall be sited and/or screened in order to minimize public views to the maximum extent practicable. Construction haul routes shall minimize impacts to sensitive uses in the City.

Level of Significance: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

LONG-TERM VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY

AES-3 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION WOULD DEGRADE THE VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS.

Impact Analysis: The visual analysis of a proposed project must consider its visual quality and compatibility in consideration of the area's visual sensitivity. The analysis provided below examines the proposed project for compatibility with the character of the surrounding residential and recreational land uses, in consideration of the following visual elements:

- Architectural features (e.g., repetition of design elements: materials, texture, colors, form, type of construction, details, and building systems);
- Scale (e.g., size relationships between adjacent buildings, and between buildings and adjacent open spaces); and
- Front, side, and rear yard setbacks.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the development of 48 residential structures within the northern portion of the project site and open space and passive recreational uses within the remainder of the project site. The proposed lot dimensions generally would reflect the development pattern of Old Town Seal Beach, with a minimum permitted lot width of 25 feet by 100 feet, although the majority of the lots would be 25 feet by 108 to 110 feet. Housing types would consist of a mix of alley and street loaded garages.

All single-family dwellings would be required to comply with the proposed *Ocean Place Property Owners Architectural Guidelines*, which would require that proposed architecture be similar to that found in Old Town. All residential construction would be subject to compliance with the RHD-20 (Residential High Density-20) standards; refer to Table 5.1-11, *Development Standards Consistency Analysis*. Proposed structures would be a maximum of 25 feet in height. The RHD-20 standards allow for a maximum density of one dwelling unit per 2,178 square feet, or 90 dwellings on the northern 4.5 acres. The Tentative Tract Map No. 17425 proposes one dwelling unit per 4,084 square feet, or 48 dwelling units, which would not exceed the maximum allowed density. The project proposes lots ranging from approximately 2,687 square feet to 3,284 square feet, in

compliance with the RHD-20 minimum lot area requirement. The project would be consistent with the RHD-20 District's minimum lot size requirement (25 feet by 100 feet). Additionally, future residential development would be subject to compliance with the RHD-20's standards regarding maximum lot coverage (75 percent). Thus, the project would appear similar in density to the residential uses to the east and less dense compared to the residential uses to the north.

The architectural design of the single-family dwellings would be encouraged to be architecturally interesting, promote diversity, and be visually compatible with Old Town Seal Beach. Foundations and exterior walls would be constructed of brick, stone, stucco, or other commercially available siding materials. Roof element variations would be encouraged. Roof mounted solar panels would be acceptable if integrated into the roofing materials and design. All proposed color treatments would be compatible with the roof color. Retaining walls and fencing would consist of materials architecturally compatible with any adjacent structures and landscaping. Wall/fencing features would incorporate landscaping material that would blend with the surrounding areas. All exterior colors would be encouraged to blend with the structure's architecture and the natural surroundings.

The project would include perimeter walls along the southern and western property boundaries. The southern perimeter wall would include a six-foot wall; the bottom three feet would consist of brick materials and the top three feet would consist of tubular steel. The western boundary would include a varying retaining wall and a three-foot tubular steel fence (the combined wall height would appear to be approximately five to six feet in height as viewed from the San Gabriel River Greenbelt). It should be noted that the RHD-20 standards would allow for future residential development to construct six-foot high side yard perimeter fencing.

The proposed project would also construct two public streets ('A' Street and 'B' Street), one private Drive, and two public alley ways (Alley 'A' and Alley 'B'). 'A' Street and 'B' Street would provide a 36-foot wide road with 56-foot right-of-way, as required by City standards. Alley 'A' would be 20 feet wide and Alley 'B' would be 16 feet wide. The proposed private drive (serving lots 36 through 40) would be approximately 23.9 feet wide.

Landscaping would be required and would be encouraged to enhance the surroundings of the primary structure. Landscaping would be similar to other planting found in Old Town (combining ornamental plant material with native plantings). The project would have a traditional curb/gutter, planted parkway, and a sidewalk configuration that matches the design throughout the majority of Old Town.

Project implementation would alter the visual character of the site and its surroundings, as the existing vacant land and residential structure would be replaced with 48 residential structures and associated infrastructure in the northern portion of the site and passive park/open space uses within the southern portion of the site. Photosimulations were prepared to demonstrate the degree of change resulting from project implementation (Key Views 1 through 3). The simulations depict massing and scale, and are intended to generally illustrate the form, size, and function of the project's proposed structures, in the context of their environmental setting. The following analyzes the project's effects on the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings, as depicted from the San Gabriel River Greenbelt (Key View 1), 1st Street (Key View 2) and the River Beach Townhomes by the Sea to the north of the project site (Key View 3).

Key View 1. Views from Key View 1 are afforded to the project site from recreational users; refer to Exhibit 5.2-6. A comparison of existing and proposed conditions from Key View 1 reveals that project implementation would result in a similar character of the area. The existing opaque silk/chain-link fence viewed would be replaced with a retaining wall and perimeter wall in the foreground views. The proposed structures would not exceed 25 feet in height, similar to the existing residential structure on-site. The proposed residential structures would be similar in character to the surrounding residential structures. Although proposed residents would have rear yards sited along the San Gabriel River Greenbelt (with associated perimeter wall features), these proposed hardscape features are similar to the existing residential structures (River Beach Townhomes by the Sea) located further northeast along the trail, which also include rear yards with associated perimeter walls along the existing trail. Middle ground views would replace the existing fencing with open space/passive recreation uses. The proposed open space/passive recreation uses would be similar to the surrounding recreational uses in the project area. Thus, impacts to the character/quality of the site and surroundings would be less than significant at Key View 1.

Key View 2. Views from Key View 2 are afforded to the project site from northbound motorists along 1st Street as well as residents to the east of the project site; refer to Exhibit 5.2-7, *Key View 2 - Existing and Proposed Conditions*. As depicted on Exhibit 5.2-7, the existing residential structures to the east of the project site front 1st Street. These existing buildings also include rear loaded garages, which allow for a pedestrian-friendly streetscape along 1st Street. A comparison of existing and proposed conditions from Key View 2 reveals that project implementation would change the character of the area as a result of the inconsistency of the proposed building orientation compared to the surrounding structures.

The future residential uses at the project site would be restricted to a maximum building height of 25 feet and maximum lot coverage of 75 percent, and thus would be similar in building height, massing, and scale to the existing residential structures to the east. However, the visual character and quality of Old Town Seal Beach is established through minimum 25-foot lots with frontage along the roadway and garage access provided through the rear yards and alleys. This supports the pedestrian scale that is desired for Old Town (the project area). Implementation of the proposed Tentative Tract Map No. 17425 would result in future residential structures with side yards along 1st Street (particularly Lots 13, 24, and 25). This design feature would be visually incompatible with the character of the residential uses to the east of the project site and would alter the neighborhood's pedestrian scale and appearance. No feasible Mitigation Measures exist that would reduce these impacts to the character of the area. Thus, impacts in this regard are concluded to be significant and unavoidable.

Key View 3. Views from Key View 3 are afforded to motorists exiting the River Beach Townhomes by the Sea; refer to Exhibit 5.2-8, *Key View 3 - Existing and Proposed Conditions*. A comparison of existing and proposed conditions from Key View 3 reveals that project implementation would alter the existing visual character of the area. Foreground views of the existing perimeter fence would be replaced with views of residential structures. The proposed 'A' Street would be visible within this Key View. The proposed structures would not exceed 25 feet in height and would be similar in massing and scale to the existing residences to the east.

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EXISTING CONDITION

PROPOSED CONDITION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

Key View 2 – Existing and Proposed Conditions

RBF CONSULTING

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Exhibit 5.2-7

EXISTING CONDITION

PROPOSED CONDITION

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT

Key View 3 – Existing and Proposed Conditions

RBF CONSULTING

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Exhibit 5.2-8

However, similar to KV 2, the proposed structures along Marina Drive would not front the street, but would rather have side yards along Marina Drive. Further, front-loaded garages would be visible for proposed structures fronting 'A' Street. Implementation of the proposed project would alter the pedestrian scale of the neighborhood. No feasible Mitigation Measures exist that would reduce these impacts to the character of the area. Thus, impacts in this regard are concluded to be significant and unavoidable.

Overall, as is evidenced by the discussions presented above, the proposed project is considered compatible in massing and scale to the surrounding uses. However, the project would result in a change in character, as the proposed structures would impact the pedestrian scale along 1st Street and Marina Drive. Impacts in this regard would be significant, despite compliance with the City's Zoning Code (i.e., RHD-20 development standards and *Ocean Place Property Owners Architectural Guidelines*). No feasible Mitigation Measures exist that would reduce these impacts to the area's character. Thus, impacts pertaining to the degradation of character/quality, particularly the character of the proposed structures compared to the existing residential structures in the area, are concluded to be significant and unavoidable.

Shade/Shadow Impacts

Implementation of the proposed project would result in the construction of 48 residential structures that would be up to 25 feet in height. These structures would be similar to surrounding structures in height and massing. Shadows introduced by the proposed buildings are not anticipated to shade any shadow sensitive uses for an extended period time, as shadows would move as the sun moves throughout the day. Resultant shade/shadow patterns onto the surrounding area would be similar in character to those existing shade/shadow patterns resulting from existing surrounding structures. Further, shade/shadow patterns resulting from the new structures onto the adjacent San Gabriel River Greenbelt would be similar in character to the existing shadows cast by the existing on-site residence as well as the existing shadow patterns cast by the adjacent River Beach Townhomes by the Sea to the north, which are also located along the trail. Impacts in this regard would be less than significant

Consistency with the California Coastal Act

The California Coastal Act requires that the visual quality of coastal areas be considered and protected as a resource of public importance. Permitted development shall be sited and designed to minimize the alteration of natural land forms, to be visually compatible with the character of surrounding areas, and, where feasible, to restore and enhance visual quality in visually degraded areas. New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting.

Implementation of the proposed project would not significantly alter the natural land form. The proposed project would result in the development of passive recreation/open space uses within the southern portion of the project site, which would buffer the transition from the public beach areas to the surrounding existing and proposed residential uses. The proposed project would not result in the degradation of the recreational character of the project area, but would rather enhance these uses. The proposed project is considered compatible in massing and scale to the surrounding uses.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are feasible.

Level of Significance: Significant and Unavoidable Impact.

LIGHT AND GLARE

AES-4 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD GENERATE ADDITIONAL LIGHT AND GLARE BEYOND EXISTING CONDITIONS.

Impact Analysis:

Short-Term (Construction) Impacts

Short-term light and glare impacts associated with construction activities would likely be limited to nighttime lighting (for safety and security purposes) in the evening hours. In accordance with Title 7, *Public Peace, Morals and Welfare*, of the Municipal Code, noise associated with the project's construction activities would be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on weekdays and between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Saturday. Noise associated with construction activities is prohibited on Sundays. Therefore, as the construction noise activities would cease at 8:00 p.m., inherently, the construction-related light and glare would also cease at 8:00 p.m. Construction staging areas may also require security lighting for equipment stored on-site. In order to minimize any potential light/glare impacts to sensitive uses, all construction-related lighting would be down-directed and oriented away from adjacent residential areas and would consist of the minimal wattage necessary to provide safety at the construction site (Mitigation Measure AES-2). Impacts in this regard would be reduced to less than significant upon implementation of the City's Municipal Code requirements and the recommended Mitigation Measure AES-2.

Long-Term (Operational) Impacts

Light sources associated with the project would include new street lights, security lights, and interior lights, which may create light spillover and glare impacts on surrounding land uses in the absence of mitigation. Mitigation Measure AES-3 would ensure that all street lighting would utilize directional lighting techniques (without compromising site safety or security) that direct light downwards and minimize light spillover onto adjacent light sensitive receptors. The project Applicant would be required to prepare and submit an Outdoor Lighting Plan that includes a footcandle map illustrating the amount of light from the project site at adjacent light sensitive receptors. Landscape lighting levels would be required to respond to the type, intensity, and location of use. Lighting requirements for the safety and security of pedestrians and vehicular movements would be anticipated. Implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-3 would ensure that long-term (operational) light and glare impacts as a result of street lighting, security lights, and interior lights would be reduced to less than significant levels.

Other sources of new lighting would include vehicle headlights entering and exiting the project site. Implementation of the proposed Tentative Tract Map No. 17425 would develop 'A' Street and 'B' Street. 'A' Street would terminate at Marina Drive, directly across from the parking lot uses and associated ornamental landscaping within the Townhomes by the Sea. The nearest residence would be approximately 100 feet away and would not be anticipated to be directly impacted by vehicle headlights exiting the project site (as these structures are separated from the project site by Marina

Drive, associated landscaping, and parking lot uses. However, 'B' Street would terminate at 1st Street, directly across from existing residential structures (approximately 60 feet away). The existing structures include three-foot perimeter fencing and ornamental landscaping, which would partially obstruct direct headlights from each of the residences. However, the lighting effect on these sensitive receptors would be a significant light/glare impact. No Mitigation Measures are feasible to reduce these impacts. Thus, impacts in this regard are concluded to be significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measures:

AES-2 All construction-related lighting shall be located and aimed away from adjacent residential areas and consist of the minimal wattage necessary to provide safety and security at the construction site. A Construction Safety Lighting Plan shall be approved by the City Engineer prior to issuance of the grading permit application.

AES-3 The project applicant shall ensure that any proposed exterior lighting fixtures, with respect to both the direction of lighting and its intensity in the private right of way and on private property, do not result in lighting spill over onto the adjacent uses. The project applicant shall prepare and submit an Outdoor Lighting Plan for both street lights and future residential uses to the Development Services Department for review and approval, prior to issuance of a grading permit. The Plan shall demonstrate compliance with all applicable Code lighting requirements and include a footcandle map illustrating the amount of light from the project site at adjacent light sensitive receptors. All exterior light fixtures (including street lighting) shall be shielded or directed away from adjoining uses. Landscape lighting levels shall respond to the type, intensity, and location of use.

Level of Significance: Significant and Unavoidable Impact.

5.2.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

SCENIC VIEWS AND VISTAS

- **THE PROPOSED PROJECT, COMBINED WITH OTHER RELATED CUMULATIVE PROJECTS, WOULD NOT HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON A SCENIC VISTA.**

Impact Analysis: As outlined in Table 4-1, *Cumulative Projects List*, and illustrated on Exhibit 4-1, *Cumulative Project Locations*, the related projects and other possible development would occur in the cities of Seal Beach and Long Beach. Based on the projects identified in Table 4-1, the only other project that would be located within the viewshed of the project site would be the proposed Marina Park Development. The Marina Park Development would result in the expansion of the existing park. Scenic views and vistas from the Marina Park Development are not anticipated to be afforded as a result of the existing mature trees that obstruct views. Further, implementation of the proposed project would not obstruct public views to the Pacific Ocean or San Gabriel River. Thus, an overall cumulatively considerable impact would not result and the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively significant impact to scenic views or vistas.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance: Less Than Significant Impact.

SHORT-TERM VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY

- **PROJECT CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, COMBINED WITH CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES FOR OTHER RELATED CUMULATIVE PROJECTS, WOULD TEMPORARILY DEGRADE THE VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY OF THE DEVELOPMENT SITES AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS.**

Impact Analysis: The proposed Marina Park Development is the only other project proposed within the viewshed of the project site. With implementation of the recommended Mitigation Measure AES-1, the proposed project would not result in the degradation of character/quality during construction. Construction of the proposed park expansion is not anticipated to occur concurrently with the proposed grading activities at the project site. Construction of the individual homes could occur concurrently with development of the park expansion project. However, construction of an individual home on a previously graded pad would not result in a significant cumulatively considerable visual impact. Thus, an overall cumulatively considerable impact would not result and the proposed project would not contribute to the cumulative degradation of character/quality at the project site.

Mitigation Measures: Refer to Mitigation Measure AES-1.

Level of Significance: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

LONG-TERM VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY

- **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, COMBINED WITH OTHER RELATED CUMULATIVE PROJECTS, WOULD NOT DEGRADE THE VISUAL CHARACTER/QUALITY OF THE DEVELOPMENT SITES AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS.**

Impact Analysis: The proposed project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts to the change in character/quality (the alteration of the neighborhood's pedestrian scale) along 1st Street and Marina Drive. The proposed Marina Park Development project is the only cumulative development proposed within the project's viewshed. It is assumed that the Marina Park Development project would progress in accordance with the City's Zoning Code. Implementation of the City's development review process would verify compliance with Zoning Code requirements regarding elements that influence the character of the Marina Park Development site. The Marina Park Development project would be analyzed in order to ensure the regulations of the relevant Zoning Code are upheld. The proposed Marina Park Development would be a continuation of existing recreational uses within the site and surrounding area. Thus, although the proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact to character/quality along 1st Street and Marina Drive, this impact would be site-specific and not cumulatively considerable. Overall, the proposed project would appear similar in massing and scale to the surrounding community. Further the proposed on-site passive recreational/open space uses would support the surrounding recreational

character of the area. Thus, cumulative impacts to long-term character/quality would be less than significant, and the proposed project would not contribute to cumulative long-term visual impacts.

Mitigation Measures: No mitigation measures are required.

Level of Significance: Less Than Significant Impact.

LIGHT AND GLARE

- **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, COMBINED WITH OTHER RELATED CUMULATIVE PROJECTS, WOULD NOT CUMULATIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO SIGNIFICANT LIGHT/GLARE IMPACTS.**

Impact Analysis:

Short-Term (Construction) Impacts

Implementation of the proposed project would result in short-term lighting impacts until 8:00 p.m. Impacts in this regard would be reduced to less than significant upon implementation of the City's Municipal Code requirements and the recommended Mitigation Measure AES-2. Construction of the proposed Marina Park Development is not anticipated to occur concurrently with the proposed grading activities at the project site. Construction of the individual homes could occur concurrently with development of the park expansion project. However, construction of an individual home on a previously graded pad would not result in a cumulatively considerable significant nighttime lighting impact. Thus, an overall cumulatively considerable impact would not result and the proposed project would not contribute to cumulative nighttime lighting impact within the project area.

Long-Term (Operational) Impacts

Light sources associated with the project would include new street lights, security lights, and interior lights, which may create light spillover and glare impacts on surrounding land uses in the absence of mitigation. Implementation of the proposed project would result in a significant and unavoidable impact to residential uses to the east as a result of vehicle headlights exiting the project site at the intersection of 'B' Street and 1st Street. However, this impact is a site-specific impact and is not cumulatively considerable.

The project would cumulatively contribute to the creation of new lighting in the general area. However, due to the distance between the cumulative project locations and the existing urban lighting that occurs within the City, the project's cumulative contribution would be minimal. Upon implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-3, long-term (operational) light and glare impacts would be further reduced. Thus, implementation of the proposed project would not cumulatively contribute to significant light/glare impacts with implementation of Mitigation Measure AES-3. Impacts in this regard would be reduced to less than significant levels.

Mitigation Measures: Refer to Mitigation Measures AES-2 and AES-3.

Level of Significance: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

5.2.6 SIGNIFICANT UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

The proposed project would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. However, project implementation would result in the degradation of character/quality along 1st Street and Marina Drive as a result of the alteration of the neighborhood's pedestrian scale. Thus, significant and unavoidable impacts involving the degradation of the existing character/quality would result. Further, implementation of the proposed project would introduce new lighting (from vehicle headlights) onto adjacent residential structures, which would be a significant and unavoidable light/glare impact. Although these significant and unavoidable impacts would occur, these impacts are site-specific. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to aesthetics/light and glare.

If the City of Seal Beach approves the project, the City shall be required to cite its findings in accordance with Section 15091 of the *CEQA Guidelines* and prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations in accordance with Section 15093 of the *CEQA Guidelines*.

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